



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

FREDERICTON, N. B.

Mr. Bliss Carman is engaged in writing a trilogy on the death of Matthew Arnold. The first part, "Death in April," appeared in the Atlantic Monthly for April 1889. The second part, "Midsummer Land," has just appeared in England in the Universal Review, accompanied by a beautiful full page engraving of Matthew Arnold. The third part, "Autumn Guard," is not yet finished.

Mr. Carman has lately been appointed to the staff of the New York Independent, as editor in charge of the department that deals with contributed articles. We extend our hearty congratulations on his success in obtaining so important a position on a periodical so widely circulated as the Independent.

University Monthly
Volume 9, Page 73
March, 1890



London: A Trilogy
in Commemoration of
Matthew Arnold: with
Lyric Interludes:

To R. H. H.

This old fragment turns
up after all these years,
and I pass it on to you.

I had entirely forgotten
it, and don't know whether
there is another copy or not.

B.L.

New Canaan
9. April 1921

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FROM " DOMINION ILLUSTRATED," MONTREAL, Feb. 9, 1889.

Mr. Charles G. D. Roberts writes that the publication of Mr. Bliss Carman's "Trilogy on Matthew Arnold," is delayed till next April to admit of the 1st part, entitled, "Death in April," being issued in the April number of "The Atlantic Monthly". This part has over 200 lines, and the compliment is an unusual one.

Corydon: A Trilogy:
in Commemoration of
Matthew Arnold: with
Lyric Interludes: by
Bliss Carman

"Out of the heel of mortals he is gone."
Thyrsis.



Fredericton: Canada
Press of L. G. Macmillan
1888

Part First: Death in April

Part Second: Midsummer Land

Part Third: Autumn Guard

Death in April.

"In low lands where the sun and moon are mute."
Ove atque velle.

Midsummer Land.

"Back to the burning fountain whence it came."
Adonais.

Autumn Guard

"While the still Morn went out with sandals grey."
Lycidas.

Part First. XVIII, l. 3. for prim read chit weak
hush, raw

1627a

Weak

and

DEATH IN APRIL.

"In low lands where the sun and moon are mute."

Ave atque vale.

DEATH IN APRIL.

I.

O Mother England, bow thy reverend head
This April morning. Over Northlands wan
Midspring comes back to freshen thee once more,
With daisies on the mounds of thy loved dead,
Like Chaucer's benediction from the dawn,
Or his, ah, me! who down thy forest floor
Went yestereven. Now
In vain thou art regirdled as alone
Of all the elder lands or younger thou
With hawthorn spray canst be,—that weariless
Eternal charm of thine, thou home of blown
Seafarers in the storm through dark and stress.

II.

'Tis Spring once more upon the Cumner hills,
And the shy Cumner vales are sweet with rain
With blossom and with sun. The burden of time
By eerie woodland messengers fulfils
Our unremembered treasuries of pain
With long lost tales of unforgotten prime;
The stir of winds asleep
Amidst of orchards through unlanguid hours
Allures us to explore the vernal deep
And unhorizoned hush wherein we wend,
Yet always some elusive weird there lowers
Haunting its uttermost cloud walls unkennd.

III.

There skirt the dim outroads of April's verge—
Memorial of an elder age—gray wraiths
Which went nowhither when the world was young,—
Grim ghosts which haunt the margins of the surge
Of latest silence. Beaming sunshine bathes
The wanderers of life, and still among
The corners of the dawn
Lurk these dark exiles of the nether sea,
Unbanished, unrecalled from ages gone.
Disowned ideals, deeds, or Furies blind,
Or murdered selves,—I know not what they be,
Yet are they terrible though death be kind.

IV.

Companioned by the myriad hosts of eld,
We journey to a land beyond the sweep
Of knowledge to determine; tented where
The storied heroes watch aforetime held,
We hold encampment for a night and sleep
Into the dawn; till, restless, here and there
A sleeper having dreamed
Of music and the childhood sound of birds
And the clear run of river heads which gleamed
Along his hither coming through the gloom,
Rouses from his late slumber, and upgirds
Him to look forth where the gold shadows loom.

V.

g.—
Ah, Cunner, Cunner, where is morning now?
A nightwatch did he bide with thee, but who
Hath his clear prime? Perchance the great dead Names,
Wide bruited, shall restore thee him, if thou
His captive flight with ransom flowers pursue
And gleaming swallows down the glittering Thames
Where the long sea-winds go.
In vain, in vain! To the hid wells of tears
In their grim waste thou canst not journey so,
Nor make leap up the old desire outworn,
For Corydon is dead these thousand years,
Dear Corydon who died this April morn.

VI.

O mother April, mother of all dreams,
 Child of remembrance, mother of regret,
 Inheritor of silence and desire,
 Who dost revisit now forsaken streams,
 Canst thou, their spirit, evermore forget
 How one sweet touch of immemorial fire
 Erewhile did use to flush
 The music of their wells, as sunset light
 Is laid athwart the springtime with keen hush ?
 Being so gracious and so loved, hast thou
 In all thy realm no shelter from the night
 Where Corydon may keep—with Thyrsis now ?

VII.

Hast thou some far sequestering retreat
 We can but measure by the pause and swing
 Of old returning seasons filled with change ?
 When far from this world, whither do thy feet
 Lead thee upon the margins of the Spring ?
 Through what calm lulls of weather dost thou range
 In smiling reverie,
 Between the crisp of dawn and noon's white glare ?
 Beyond the borders of the wintry sea,
 Remembering those who loved thy garment's hem
 As children love the oxeyes, dost thou there
 Reserve a shadow of content for them ?

VIII.

Belike some tender little grave-eyed boy
Of mild regard and wistful plaintive moods,
Fondling of earth, darling of God, too shy
For fellowship with comrades, finds employ
In undiscoverable solitudes
Of childhood, when the gravel paths are dry
And the still noons grow long.
In the old garden's nook of quiet sun,
Where brownies, elfin-things, and sun-motes throng,
He builds a hut of the half-brown fir boughs—
Whose winter banking for the flowers is done—
And there all day his royal fairy house

IX.

He keeps, with entertainment of such guests
As no man may bring home ; he peoples it
As never Homer peopled Troy with kings.
In the wide morning his unnamed behests
Strange foresters obey, while he doth sit
And murmur what his sparrow playmate sings
From the dark cedar hedge.
Twin tiny exiles from the vast outland,
They know the secret unrecorded pledge
Whereby the children of the dawn are told.
The toiling small red ants are his own band
Of servitors ; his minstrels from of old—

X.

Light-hearted pillagers of golden shrines—
The bees were, in the willows; row on row
Are his the ~~tall~~ white lilacs in the sun;
And his the stainless roof-work of the pines.
He in that wide unhaste beats to and fro,
Borne far a-wind as a poised bird might run,
Or as a sunburnt shard
Might gleam, washed over by the glimmering sea:
A mother hand hath still his doom in guard:
The sparrow cadence and the lilac's prime
Go build the soul up of a man to be,
While yet he kens them not, nor self, nor time.

XI.

O mother April, mother of all dreams,
In thy far dwelling keepest thou for him
Such hospitable bounty? Hast thou there
A welcome of seclusion and sweet streams
Of sheer blue waters at whose running brim,
Under the gold of that enchanted air,
Thy frail windflowers are spread?
Crown with thy smile the end of his rare quest,
And cherish on thy knees that holiest head;
Sweet mother, comfort his dear spirit now
With perfect calm, with long abiding rest,
And that love thou canst tend him—only thou!

XII.

April, O mother of all the dappled hours,
Restorer of lost days for whom we long,
Bringer of seedtime—of the flowers and birds,
Sower of bounty—of the buds and showers,
Exalter of dumb hearts to the brink of song,
Revealer of blind Winter's runic words!
Relief from losing strife
To him thou givest and to us regret.
Wilt thou requicken ~~er~~ there to life
Our dreams which troop across the burning hills?
Or on some primal bleak windlands forget
Thy yearning children by their woodland rills?

XIII.

We muse and muse and never quite forego
The sure belief in thy one home at last.
The years may drive us with dull toil and blind,
Till age bring down a covering like snow
Of many winters, yet the pausing blast
Hath rifts of quiet, and the frozen wind
Zones of remindful peace;
Then, while some pale green twilight fades to gold,
There comes a change—and we have found release
In the old way at thy returning hands.
Forever in thy care we grow not old,
No barrows of the dead are in thy lands.

XIV.

O April, mother of desire and June,
Great Angel of the sunshine and the rain,
Thou, only thou canst evermore redeem
The world from bitter death, or quite retune
The morning with low sound wherein all pain
Bears part with incommunicable dream
And lisping undersong,
Above thy woodbanks of anemone.
A spirit goes before thee, and we long
In tears to follow where thy windways roam—
Depart and traverse back the toiling sea,
Nor weary any more in alien home.

XV.

With what high favor hast thou rarely given
A springtime death as thy bestowal of bliss :
On Avon once thy tending hands laid by
The puppet robes, the curtained scenes were riven,
And the great prompter smiled at thy long kiss ;
And Corydon's own master sleeps a-nigh
The stream of Rotha's well,
Where thou didst bury him thy dearest child ;
In one sweet year the Blessed Damozel
Beholds thee bring her lover, loved by thee,
Outworn for rest, whom no bright shore beguiled,
To voyage out across the gray North Sea,—

XVI.

And slowly Assabet takes on her charm,
Since him she most did love thou hast withdrawn
Beyond the well-springs of perpetual day.
And now 'tis Laleham: from all noise and harm.
Blithe and boy hearted, whither is he gone,
(Like them who fare in peace—knowing thy sway
Is over earls and kings,
He was too great to cease to be a child,
Too wise to be content with childish things)
Having heard swing-to the twin-leaved doors of gloom
Pillared with autumn dust from out the wild
And carved upon with BEAUTY and FOREDOOM?

XVII.

Awhile within the roaring iron house
He toiled to thrill the bitter dark with cheer;
But ever the earlier prime wrapped his white soul
In sure and flawless welfare of repose,
Kept like a rare Greek song through many a year
With Chian terebinth—an illumined scroll
No injury can deface.
And men will toss his name from sea to sea
Along the wintry dusk a little space,
Till thou return with flight of swallow and sun
To weave for us the rain's hoar tracery,
With blossom and dream unravelled and undone.

XVIII.

We joy in thy brief tarrying, and beyond—
The vanished road's end lies engulfed in snow
Far on the mountains of a ~~grim~~ new morn. *Heard*
Craving the light, yet of the dark more fond,
Abhorring and desiring do we go,—
A cruse of tears, and love with leaven of scorn,
Mingled for journey fare,—
While in the vision of a harvest land
We see thy river wind and, looming there,
Death walk within thy shadow, proudly grim,
A little dust and sleep in his right hand—
The withered windflowers of thy forest dim.

AD VESPERUM.

Call to me, thrush,
When day grows dim,
When death is near
And night is warm.

Stir the keen hush
On twilight's rim,
When my own star
Is white and clear.

Fly low to brush
Mine eyelids grim,
Where sleep and storm
Have set their bar,

For time shall crush
Spring balm for him,
Stark on his bier
Past fault or harm.

Who once, as flush
Of dream might skim
The dusk, afar
In sleep shall hear

Thy song's cool rush
With calm rebrim
The world, and sear
The gloom with cheer.

Then, Heartsease, hush :
If sense grow dim,
Desire shall steer
Us home from far !

E TENEBRIS.

Call to me, thrush,
When night grows dim,
When dreams uniform,
And death is far.

When hoar dews flush
The dawn's rathe brim,
Wake me to hear
Thy wild wood charm,—

As a lone rush
Astir in the slim
White stream where sheer
Blue mornings are.